

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
November 14, 2001

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Steven Campbell
Mike Kennedy
Sylvia Kiel
Ralph Komasinski
Alfonso Lerma, Jr.

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:

Amy Clem
Betty Martin
Dr. J. Douglas Nelson
Katherine Startin

Chairman Sylvia Kiel called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. The meeting was held in the Indiana Government Center South, 402 W. Washington Street, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Secretary Ralph Komasinski announced that a quorum of the Commission was present.

A motion was made and unanimously approved to accept the minutes of the Commission meeting of September 12, 2001. The motion carried.

Chairman Kiel asked for a motion to approve the Commission's 1999-00 & 2000-01 report. A motion was made to approve the report, after hearing no discussion the motion to approve the report was seconded and approved unanimously.

A motion was then made and seconded to approve the meeting schedule for 2002. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Kiel than noted that a Mr. Nathan L. Glaeser had submitted an appeal requesting that his application for a state grant in the form of a National Guard supplemental grant be approved. Ms. Keil asked if Mr. Glaeser or his representative was present and invited them to present before the commission. Mr. Glaeser nor any representative for him identified themselves thus Ms. Keil asked members for comments and or motions. Mr. Lerma stated that he had reviewed the appeal and that in his opinion Mr. Glaeser request did not warrant being granted. No other comments were made. Mr Lerma moved to deny Mr. Glaeser's appeal. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kennedy and unanimously approved.

Chairman Kiel asked Mr. Perlini to give his Executive Director's report. Mr. Perlini commented on the following:

(David can insert additional language)

- ◆ Budget update,
- ◆ Governor's impending press conference on the economy, budget cutting appears unavoidable and will likely include cuts in higher education funding in some form - probable cuts to university budgets, which will cause increases in tuition and fees, possible cuts in SSACI grant aid.
- ◆ All is complicated for the 2002-03 year for the 21st programs by Purdue's 24% increase for new students for the 2002-03 academic year (since 21st awards are based on current year Tuition and fees (T&F)) - others schools that may follow - Purdue' action will definitely affect HEA/FOC SSACI grants for the 2003-04 year and beyond since HEA/FOC uses pervious year T&F.

Chairman Kiel then invited Mr. Obergfell to give the Grant Division's report. Mr. Obergfell noted that SSACI staff Outreach Coordinator, Kathy Moore continues to travel the state conducting high school workshops. He said that Ms. Moore is doing a outstanding job of getting high school guidance counselors up to speed with respect to the student aid process and programs so that counselors can in turn inform high school students about the financial aid process for the 2002-03 academic year.

Mr. Obergfell also spoke about a few of the agency's new *e*-government initiatives including *e*-student. In short, he said that students are now able to access their SSACI grant histories online and make school changes online. He said that previously students had to write or fax changes in school choice to SSACI and that SSACI staff would then data enter the changes and mail students new award letters. He said now students can not only make school changes online, but that they can also instantly print out new award notices, saving the students time and the state money since the agency has less paper to process and fewer award notices to mail students. He noted that Nick Vesper and others in the office have helped to develop other internet-related services for students and that in the near future he hoped to give commission members a demonstration of the *e*-government services the agency has recently developed.

Mr. Perlini explained to the commission recent recommendations from Indiana's Educational Round table for Improving Student Preparedness for College. He complemented the roundtable desire to improve the academic preparedness of Hoosier students but questioned one of the roundtable's recommendations for insuring more Hoosier student would graduate from high school with Core 40 credentials. Specifically, Mr. Perlini noted that the roundtable has recommended that SSACI aid be cut from those who do not graduate from high school with a Core 40 diploma, and instead be directed to Core 40 and Academic Honor Diploma graduates. (NOTE: elaborate as to why David's concerns are justified:

- ◆ the roundtable's recommendations targets the poor
- ◆ the need to be able to market the new requirements (and the money that goes with such an effort) among others.

Mr. Vesper gave the commission an overview of the potential ramifications of the roundtable's recommendation. **(Need to insert Nick's numbers of those that would be left behind if roundtable's recommendations were adopted as proposed.)**

Chairman Kiel voiced that while she agreed with intent of the roundtable's goal to improve the academic preparedness of Hoosier students, she was troubled with the notion of cutting off SSACI aid from those who did not graduate from high school with Core 40 credentials. Chairman Kiel said that she did not believe it was within the commission authority to set such standards and questioned whether such action was not contrary to the commission mission to make college affordable and accessible to all that were admitted by a SSACI-eligible institution. Chairman Kiel said that if Indiana's colleges required a Core 40 for admission or if Indiana's Department of Education required students to graduate from high school with a Core 40 diploma, then the commission would be in a better position to base its awards to students accordingly, but that absent such an infrastructure then SSACI would be ill-advised to base its awards without it.

Mr. Komaskinski said the numbers that Mr. Perlini and Mr. Vesper had shared with the commission with respect to the number of students without Core 40 credentials who would be disqualified from receiving SSACI aid if Core 40 a requirement were stunning. While Mr. Komaskinski supported the desire to promote academic excellence for Hoosier students, he cautioned the commission to be extremely careful before taking any measure that would disenfranchise financially needy students who would otherwise qualify for state financial grant assistance.

Steven Campbell also complimented the roundtable's desire to raise the academic standards of Hoosier students, but agreed with Ms. Kiel's concern for those left behind due to an information vacuum and he noted that roundtable's recommendations posed other public policy concerns. He said the roundtable should be credited with raising an important issue and that the commission should explore ways to provide an incentives to students to take Core 40 curriculum without closing the door on those most vulnerable to missing out on doing so.

Alfonso Lerma Jr. also spoke in support of the roundtable goals to raise the academic standards of Hoosier students, but voiced strong concern that any action taken by the commission with respect to tying SSACI awards with Core 40 credential should not be made before the consequences and alternatives of adopting such a policy were thoughtfully considered.

There was unanimous consensus among commission members that a policy which denies aid to needy students state who are qualified enough to be admitted to any one of the institutions eligible to participate in SSACI's programs is inherent unfair and potentially discriminatory.

Mike Kennedy proposed a resolution which recommended staff to assemble a position paper that supports the roundtable's desire to raise the educational standards of Hoosier students, but that recommends alternative ways to incentivize students to pursue Core 40 diplomas, rather than punish those, who for whatever reason, be it lack of information at the time entering high school or of the importance of pursuing a Core 40 diploma in the 7 & 8 grade, did not "enlist" in the Core 40 curriculum and subsequently graduate with Core 40 credentials. In short, he suggested that the commission staff should propose other means by which the commission could encourage students to take Core 40 curriculum without leaving the most financially needy students behind insofar as state financial aid was concerned. A resolution to this effect was seconded and passed unanimously.

Mr. Perlino noted that T.K. Olson recently retired as President of the Independent Colleges of Indiana, and introduced Mr. Anthony C. Maidenburg, who is currently serving as ICI's acting President. Mr. Maidenburg introduced himself and was welcomed by the commission.

Hearing no other calls for new or old business, the meeting was adjourned.